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ABSTRACT

In this paper, a coalition representing nearly 50 diverse organizations committed to expanding equity for girls and women in all aspects of education expresses concern that very little attention has been directed to the particular needs of women and girls in general, and of minority women and girls in particular, in the formulation of the national education goals and objectives. This analysis presents the coalition's views regarding the concerns and strategies that must be taken into account to assure that women and girls are full and successful partners in the pursuit of educational excellence. The six National Education Goals, to be achieved by the year 2000, are the following: (1) all children in the United States will start school ready to learn; (2) the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent; (3) U.S. students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography, and every school in the United States will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy; (4) U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement; (5) every U.S. adult will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and (6) every U.S. school will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. This document addresses the specific problems of females in benefiting from each of these goals, and presents recommendations regarding what will be needed to enable them to succeed. (DK)

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Education For All: Women and Girls Speak Out On the National Education Goals

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May, 1990

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PREFACE

The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, which represents nearly 50 diverse national organizations committed to expanding equity for girls and women in all aspects of education, is pleased to present *Education for All: Women and Girls Speak Out on the National Education Goals.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, composed of nearly fifty national organizations devoted to achieving sex-equity in education, strongly supports efforts to improve our educational system. Nonetheless, we are concerned that very little attention has been devoted to the particular needs of women and girls, including minority women and girls, in formulating the national education goals and strategies to achieve them. This paper presents our views regarding the concerns which must be taken into account in implementing the national education goals to assure that women and girls are full partners in the pursuit of educational excellence.

Goal 1 (All Children Will Start School Ready to Learn): Special attention must be focused on the needs of the millions of children in female-headed households which are disproportionately low-income and non-white. To achieve the worthy goal of school readiness, adequate health care, nutrition, and living standards must first be assured to these families. Appropriate child care must be guaranteed, Head Start must be available to all eligible children and parental leave must be a basic right of American workers. Finally, the link to adult literacy must be stressed because parental literacy has a direct bearing on children's learning.

Goal 2 (The High School Graduation Rate Will Increase to 90 Percent): Because early pregnancy and parenting account for approximately 40% of female drop-outs, schools should adopt programs to meet the needs of these students. These include pregnancy prevention programs, the provision of health services to pregnant students, and programs to assist pregnant and parenting students in completing their education. In addition, schools should provide parenting students with access to child care. Further, pervasive gender-bias in teaching, curricula, and materials often make schools inhospitable to girls. Teachers must be trained to avoid gender-role stereotyping both in expectations and actual teaching. Cooperative educational methods, which are typically more successful for girls, should be stressed.

Goal 3 (Students Will Demonstrate Competency Over Challenging Subject Matter): It is key to eliminate stereotyped assumptions about the abilities and appropriate roles of female and minority students and to assure that teaching methods effectively meet diverse learning styles. In addition, care must be devoted to implementing appropriate, authentic, and unbiased assessment techniques. Standardized multiple-choice tests often contain race and sex biases and may not even provide an accurate measure of what they are intended to assess. Further, their overuse dilutes the curriculum as it encourages "teaching to the test" rather than the development of the higher order competencies referred to in the goal. Examples of appropriate assessments include teacher observations, performances, exhibitions, portfolios, checklists, and open-ended questions which encourage real thought.

Goal 4 (U. S. Students Will Be First in the World in Math and Science): Efforts to strengthen math and science education should be made throughout the educational process. Examples of intervention programs which have proven to enhance the achievement of girls and women in these areas include: an emphasis on collaborative rather than competitive teaching styles; "hands-on" classwork; equal access to equipment including computers; and an awareness of and commitment to equity issues. Further, steps must be taken to increase the number of female professionals, including teachers, in the math and science areas with a particular emphasis on keeping girls and women in the math/science "pipeline."

Goal 5 (Every Adult American Will Be Literate): Because illiteracy is a problem of greater magnitude for those at the economic margin, particularly women, and because the literacy level of a mother strongly affects the educational attainment of her children, resources must be targeted and specific strategies developed to improve female literacy. Support services must be assured to participants in literacy and basic skills education programs and higher education should be a realistic goal for women who receive welfare, displaced homemakers and other reentry women. And, we must strengthen the connection between literacy and occupational skills training in employment and vocational education programs. Indeed, students who complete vocational/technical school, employment training, and community college programs should be able to think critically, communicate effectively and solve problems – just as four-year college graduates are expected to.

Goal 6 (Schools Will Be Free of Drugs and Violence): The particular needs of girls and women must be addressed in connection with this goal. Adequate drug and alcohol treatment programs must be available to pregnant teenagers who are substance abusers. Further, sexual harassment and sexual assault are all too real problems in our nation's schools. Eliminating these problems must be central to the elimination of violence in our nation's schools and the creation of a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

INTRODUCTION

The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE) strongly supports the ongoing efforts of the National Governors Association and the Administration to improve the educational system in this country. NCWGE includes nearly fifty national organizations devoted to enhancing opportunities and achieving equity for women and girls at all levels of education. A list of NCWGE organizations which have formally endorsed *Education For All: Women and Girls Speak Out On The National Education Goals* is attached as Appendix A.

We are concerned, however, that very little attention has been directed to the particular needs of women and girls, in general, and minority women and girls, in particular, in the formulation of the national education goals and objectives.

If there is to be any realistic hope of achieving the ambitious and critically important objectives which have been set forth, the special problems confronted by these populations – as well as other minority and disadvantaged groups – will have to be forthrightly addressed in a thoughtful and constructive manner.

NCWGE has prepared the following analysis to present our views regarding the concerns and strategies which must be taken into account to assure that women and girls are full and successful partners in the pursuit of educational excellence.

We hope *Education For All: Women and Girls Speak Out On The National Education Goals* will spark a fruitful dialogue on the issues surrounding gender-equity in education which can only help achieve the goals we all support.

GOAL 1: BY THE YEAR 2000 ALL CHILDREN IN AMERICA WILL START SCHOOL READY TO LEARN

NCWGE strongly supports the goal of school-readiness for all children. To reach this goal, we must enhance the ability of all families to prepare their children for school. Consideration must be given to the particular needs of the growing number of female-headed households which are disproportionately low-income and non-white. In 1987, well over half of the more than 5.5 million poor households in this country with children – 59.8% – were headed by women. Women headed a full 79.8% of the over 1.8 million poor black households with children. Special attention must be focused on these families if their children are to "start school ready to learn."

The following steps are central to this undertaking:

1. The availability of adequate health care, nutrition and living standards for all families must be assured. This includes the guarantees of medical assistance and other delivery systems for health care, programs such as WIC, and the basic necessity of adequate housing. In addition, income support systems, such as AFDC, must be enhanced to provide families with an income on which they can realistically and dependably live with dignity.

2. Both the federal and state governments must act to assure parental leave, a basic job protection for working families. There is no national requirement that employers provide such leave: in all too many circumstances working mothers are forced to choose between taking an adequate parental leave – critical to their child's development as well as their own health – and keeping their jobs. They face similar problems when their children are ill. The problems are particularly severe for low-income and single mothers.

3. We must assure adequate child care for the children of working mothers, particularly low-income working mothers. Mothers who do not have access to appropriate, safe and affordable child care will not be able to focus on the praiseworthy goal of preparing their children for school. Further, steps must be taken to assure that child care providers have the resources to play an important role in preparing children for school. Particular emphasis must be devoted in this regard to the child care component of the JOBS program which serves the children of AFDC mothers.

4. Head Start, one of the most successful early childhood programs, must be available to all eligible children.

5. The linkage between school readiness and goal 5 (every adult American will be literate) must be stressed because parental literacy has a direct bearing on children's learning. As a result, addressing adult female literacy will have a demonstrated and beneficial impact in achieving the goal of school-readiness for all children. This is especially important in light of the disproportionately high percentage of low-income children living in female-headed households.

GOAL 2: BY THE YEAR 2000, THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE WILL INCREASE TO AT LEAST 90 PERCENT.

NCWGE recognizes that many of the factors that lead students to drop out of school are common to male and female students. For example, both young women and men may choose to leave high school because they see no connection between high school completion and future income.

There are, however, factors that have a particular impact on girls. These include early pregnancy and parenting, as well as pervasive gender bias in teaching, curricula, and materials that makes schools inhospitable to girls. NCWGE recommends adding the following objectives to achieve Goal 2:

1) Pregnant and parenting students should be served by comprehensive, non-coercive, programs that encourage and enable them to complete high school. Although a variety of factors lead girls to drop out of school, 40 percent of female dropouts leave school for reasons related to pregnancy. Half of all teen mothers do not complete high school. Strategies are needed that address pregnancy prevention, as well as the needs of pregnant and parenting girls.

a) Prevention – Pregnancy prevention programs in schools should teach life-planning and decision-making skills, offering remedial education and tutoring services, and providing vocational education, to help to give girls a sense of their own possibilities.

Pregnancy prevention is especially important in the early and middle school years and should foster empowerment and encourage girls to take control of their own lives and destinies. Programs should provide opportunities for and encourage family communication about the risks and long-term impact of early pregnancy. School-based or school-linked clinics that provide reproductive health services are also key to reducing pregnancy rates.

b) Pregnancy – Pregnant teens should be encouraged to complete high school; alternative schools and home visits or tutoring programs should be made available to them. Classes in prenatal care, child birth, and child development are essential to the health of both the teen and her baby. Comprehensive health services available at or near schools will facilitate pregnant teens' continued attendance. Pregnant teens should be informed of their right to stay in school, as well as the availability of alternative educational institutions.

c) Parenting – Teens who become parents should have access to child care during school hours. School-based child care, which permits parents to spend time with their children at lunch and during other breaks in the school day, is particularly effective in keeping teen parents in school. Mentoring programs that pair teens

with older parents, as well as family life and parenting classes, are also effective strategies. Programs that keep fathers involved in caring for their children or that offer assistance in collecting child support payments are important components of parenting programs. Information and referral services and coordination of community and school programs for parenting teens are critical to the success of programs for students who are parents.

2) All teachers should be trained to be conscious of gender-role stereotyping in the classroom so they can create a more equitable learning environment. Curriculum and textbook reform is necessary to ensure that girls, minorities and persons with disabilities see themselves reflected in history and literature as leaders, not just as helpers and victims.

Classroom dynamics, teaching methods, curricula, and materials that reinforce gender-stereotyped expectations of student interests and abilities result in low self-esteem and underachievement by girls. When schools undervalue her abilities, discourage her achievement in "nontraditional" areas, and undermine her confidence, a girl's decision to drop out can be an affirmative strategy for taking control of her life. Understanding and responding to sex stereotyping in classroom interaction and educational methods and materials is essential to lowering drop-out rates for girls.

a) Gender-role Socialization – A key result of the well-documented differences in socialization of females and males is that girls respond better to educational methods which emphasize cooperation over competition. Efforts to reform curricula and teaching to emphasize working in groups will result in a classroom climate that is more hospitable to girls.

b) Teaching and Curricula – Female high school dropouts often explain that they feel alienated from the adults in their lives, including their teachers. Classroom studies show that teachers pay more attention to boys, ask them more complex questions than they ask girls, encourage boys to speak in class, and provide them with assistance in solving problems, rather than solving problems for them. Girls most often receive attention and praise for being quiet in class and are seldom encouraged to experiment and explore. Girls receive the message that they do not have the same abilities as boys and that additional effort on their part will not result in increased academic success.

Teacher education programs must train teachers to recognize and break patterns of gender-stereotyped expectations and behaviors. Teachers can make classrooms more welcoming to their female students by providing girls and boys with the same toys, curricular materials, and equipment; using educational materials that portray females and males in a variety of roles; setting up gender-neutral group projects; emphasizing cooperative learning models; leading class discussions about gender-role expectations; and encouraging all students to pursue their interests and abilities.

GOAL 3: BY THE YEAR 2000, AMERICAN STUDENTS WILL LEAVE GRADES FOUR, EIGHT AND TWELVE HAVING DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCY OVER CHALLENGING SUBJECT MATTER INCLUDING ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY, AND EVERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA WILL ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS LEARN TO USE THEIR MINDS WELL, SO THEY MAY BE PREPARED FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP, FURTHER LEARNING AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN OUR MODERN ECONOMY.

NCWGE certainly agrees that raising student achievement is critical to the nation's economic prosperity and social well-being. To achieve this goal, sex and race equity as well as equity for students with disabilities must be ensured, with careful consideration given to how all students are treated in the classroom. Further, policymakers must move away from reliance on standardized multiple-choice test scores and to the use of authentic and appropriate methods of measuring student achievement. We will treat these issues in turn.

1) Student Treatment and Learning Styles

All students must be given the opportunity to fully develop their academic and critical thinking skills, regardless of the grade level and the educational program, and including vocational educational programs. All too often, stereotyped assumptions about the abilities and appropriate roles of female students, students of color and students with disabilities are operative in America's classrooms. Much of the resulting differential treatment is unconscious and subtle, but as we have discussed in connection with Goal 2, that does not make its detrimental impact any less.

Further, all students do not receive and process new information in the same manner: different students have different styles of learning. For example, some students respond more effectively to an educational environment that encourages collaborative learning activities and uses "hands-on" exercises; others may be comfortable with an independent study approach; while others may flourish in a highly competitive setting. Because teachers are more likely to teach in the same style in which they prefer to learn, NCWGE recommends that educators must be prepared to recognize and accommodate students' diverse learning styles.

2) Student Assessment

Schools should move away from reliance on standardized multiple-choice test scores and to the use of alternative, authentic and appropriate methods of assessing education performance and progress. Traditionally, schools have relied heavily on standardized multiple-choice tests to measure the mastery of knowledge, but research has shown that many of these very measurement tools contain race and sex

biases. In some instances, the tests may not even provide an accurate measure of what they are intended to assess. In addition, our growing reliance on standardized tests leaves us vulnerable to the overuse and even misuse of tests, which, in turn, reduces the quality of education by narrowing and distorting the curricula.

The fact that some of the nation's most often used assessment tools favor one gender or race/ethnic group over another has been well documented in recent years. For example, studies of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) mathematics and science assessments have found significant gender differences in favor of boys, even though girls earn better grades. On the math assessment, few differences exist at ages 9 and 13, but young men received better scores than young women at age 17, even when general course background was held constant; in the High School and Beyond (HSB) mathematics test, young men received better scores than young women as sophomores and seniors, but the women had higher average math grades – even in advanced math courses. A study of the NAEP science assessment points out a flaw common to most, if not all, multiple-choice tests. Here, girls are more likely than boys to choose the response, "I don't know" rather than to guess; but guessing often boosts scores in a multiple-choice format. On these tests, girls are often penalized for the same careful, analytical thinking that results in their better grades in high school in the first place.

There are equally serious concerns about the impact of testing on the overall quality of our educational system. With test scores increasingly used as the sole criterion for evaluation, teachers and entire school systems are being judged simply by their students' scores. The result is a narrowing of the curricula, since it is inevitable that teachers will teach "to the test." Indeed, many schools overtly encourage this process.

School systems, for example, can now buy products which allow them to "align" their curriculum to state-mandated, minimum competency tests. Thus, academic skills which are not on the test, regardless of their value or importance, are often neglected. Instruction in basic skills (such as reading) may suffer because of the overemphasis on standardized tests.

Yet another concern is the psychological effect of standardized tests. The scientific aura surrounding tests often causes test takers – along with their parents, principals and teachers – to consider the test infallible and test scores an accurate reflection of their aptitude or ability. Evidence shows that many students internalize test scores and adjust their self-perceptions and goals to match those scores; indeed, girls are more likely than boys to believe that SAT scores rather than grades define their "aptitude." These assessments too often become self-fulfilling prophecies for low-scoring students, and encourage lowered expectations by teachers, the use of an inferior curriculum and the students' diminished self-esteem.

Instead of multiple-choice, standardized tests, appropriate assessments include teacher observations, performances, exhibitions, portfolios of student work, checklists, and open-ended questions that encourage real thought. The results of such assessment techniques can be put into a form that will provide useful data and genuine accountability to local, state and national policy makers.

3) Citizenship

NCWGE wholeheartedly agrees that all students need to be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this nation and about the world community. However, it is important that America's students learn to recognize and appreciate the many important contributions of women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Our schools must ensure that these contributions are fairly and accurately represented in curricula, including the textbooks and other materials. To ensure that this objective is met, staff development courses and training programs must be made available for teachers and administrators.

GOAL 4: BY THE YEAR 2000, U. S. STUDENTS WILL BE FIRST IN THE WORLD IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE ACHIEVEMENT.

In order to reach this goal, special attention should be paid to the math and science education of girls, minorities and persons with disabilities at all levels of education. Emphasis must also be placed on enhancing their career opportunities, including teaching, in these fields.

1) While we certainly support the goal of strengthening math and science education, steps to achieve this goal should not be limited to, or even focused, on the early grades. Instead, efforts must be made throughout the educational process. Indeed, research shows that the key points at which girls/women drop out of the math and science pipeline are 4th grade, 8th grade, 12th grade, second year college and during graduate school.

NCWGE urges the careful examination of how math and science education can be improved for all students, including all gender and ethnic groups and persons with disabilities. This will involve evaluating barriers that currently exist including: teacher bias; societal bias; lack of adequate materials and education; and antiquated teacher training methods. More particularly, we suggest that tested "intervention" programs be launched at every level of education. Students learn math and science better when the classroom has the following components:

- children are taught in a style that encourages collaborative projects rather than competitive style;
- children are taught with a "hands-on" style, with an emphasis on experimentation and letting everyone have equal access to equipment, calculators, tools, and computers;
- there is more individual teacher/student interaction;
- non-sexist and non-racist materials are used;
- the teacher gives more time for students to answer questions;
- the teacher provides role models to illustrate career choices;
- teachers direct more questions to females, encouraging them to take risks and develop independence; and
- teachers, principals, administrators, and counselors actively support the goal of equity.

2) NCWGE endorses increasing the number of teachers with a math/science background, especially the number of women teachers. Data show that women are not entering the teaching fields of math and science at the same rate as men, while women's participation in natural science and engineering is actually decreasing.

The reasons for this trend include many traditional barriers such as: prevailing societal pressures; discrimination against women in the classroom and laboratories; lack of strong female role models at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as in the labor force.

NCWGE recommends implementing intervention programs with proven, successful track records, including:

- sabbaticals for teachers to study math/science equity issues as part of their plan of study;
- textbook changes that have been designed to be gender/race inclusive;
- assessment programs which place more emphasis on overall grades;
- in-service programs for teachers interested in the math/science area;
- active encouragement for women and girls to pursue science and math careers;
- mentoring and role model projects;
- more "hands-on" internships and summer jobs;
- programs for women who are preparing to re-enter the job market; and,
- the availability of part-time study in college and graduate school.

3) NCWGE endorses efforts to increase the number of female and minority undergraduate and graduate students in math, science, and engineering. It has been documented that females limit or end their math training in high school or after entering college, taking an average of half a year less math and one year less physical science than males. This is even more alarming when one considers the fact that females' grades are better in these areas. Job discrimination and conflicts between professional achievement and family responsibilities also limit women's career choices. Since careers in math and science are not often sensitive to combining family/career, and role models are all too infrequent, it is hard for women and girls to envision themselves in math and science careers. Therefore, there must be concerted effort on behalf of the professions and the preparatory institutions in addressing these issues.

NCWGE recommends the following steps to keep girls and women on the math/science career track:

- Begin early and sustain equity programs in math/science classrooms for planned interventions at critical periods of education;
- Use role models from the work force to illustrate different career choices;
- Encourage business and government agencies to hire with flextime arrangements;
- Allow more part-time study and work programs in math and science; and
- Encourage math/science teachers and professors to take equity training.

GOAL 5: BY THE YEAR 2000, EVERY ADULT AMERICAN WILL BE LITERATE AND WILL POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO COMPETE IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY AND EXERCISE THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP.

Targeting resources and developing specific strategies to improve female literacy are critical to America's economic, social and political well-being.

While illiteracy affects people of all ages, races, ethnicities, classes and both sexes, it is a problem of greater magnitude for those at the economic margin, particularly women. Women and girls with minimal literacy skills are more likely than illiterate men to find themselves in economic jeopardy. Whether they have dependent family members or not, there is a strong correlation between low educational attainment and poverty for women. Women of color (especially those for whom English is a second language) and older women have traditionally had little access to quality education and are even more likely to be poor. The literacy level of a mother strongly affects the educational attainment of her children. Without efforts to increase the literacy skills of women, we risk perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy for their children. Children of educationally disadvantaged single mothers are doubly jeopardized.

For economically and educationally disadvantaged women, there are numerous barriers which must be addressed in order for them to participate successfully in literacy and basic skills education programs. Such women need increased federal student aid as well as the provision of support services. Dependent care and transportation, for example, are often critical for making literacy programs accessible to women. In addition, we must value higher education as a goal for women who receive welfare, and for displaced homemakers and other reentry women. And, we must strengthen the connection between literacy and occupational skills training in employment training and vocational education programs.

Finally, as women have increased their labor force participation, they have become more critical to the American economy. The majority of new entrants to the labor force from now to the year 2000 will be women; nearly half of all workers will be female. If America is to build and maintain a competitive work force, we must ensure that the literacy skills of women workers meet the demands of available jobs, which are becoming more complex and require higher skill levels than ever before.

More specifically, we make the following recommendations:

1) The connection between education and work must be strengthened by improving the quality of schools and vocational training, but these improvements will not be enough, in and of themselves. Businesses must also ensure that the jobs they offer will use workers' skills and potential, and that the wages they pay will be a sufficient incentive for students to complete school or vocational training in the first place.

Business and education must recognize the necessity of preparing an ethnically and racially diverse group of women and men, as well as persons with disabilities, for the full range of occupations. Sex, race and ethnic stereotyping in education and employment training must be eliminated.

2) Sex equity must be ensured in vocational education programs, as well as other public and private education and employment training programs. Women must have access and support for training in higher-paying nontraditional jobs.

In addition, it is critical to incorporate literacy and basic skills education into publicly-funded employment training programs such as vocational education and Job Training Partnership Act programs.

3) Effective, quality employment and training programs should combine literacy/basic skills education with employment or other skills training. To ensure the participation of women who would not otherwise be able to participate, support services, including dependent care, are a critical program component.

There should be an expanded emphasis on family literacy or intergenerational literacy strategies.

4) Workforce 2000 projections indicate that most jobs of the future will require education or training beyond high school. Thus, it will be critical for post-secondary education programs to be considered a goal for women who receive welfare, displaced homemakers, re-entry women and other low-income people who are not considered traditional students. In addition, it must be recognized that these students may require targeted outreach and recruiting, pre-college counseling, and support services in order to enter and complete post-secondary programs successfully.

5) Students who complete vocational/technical school programs, employment training programs, and community college programs should be able to demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems. This goal should by no means be limited to four-year college graduates.

GOAL 6: BY THE YEAR 2000, EVERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA WILL BE FREE OF DRUGS AND VIOLENCE AND WILL OFFER A DISCIPLINED ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING.

In creating a safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning, it is imperative that the needs of *all* students be addressed. Substance abuse by young women can result in special problems related to pregnancy and reproductive health, and girls and women have special needs related to their greater risk of sexual harassment and sexual assault. The following issues must be addressed in working to create a safe educational environment for female students.

1) **Substance Abuse** – Attempts to rid schools of drugs should include efforts to prevent use of tobacco and alcohol, as well as narcotics, by both students and teachers. Young women are currently starting to smoke cigarettes at a faster rate than young men, and abuse of alcohol and narcotics poses a particular reproductive health threat to girls. Programs that educate students and teachers about the dangers of substance abuse should be combined with initiatives that assist those who smoke, drink, or use drugs to change their behavior. It is critical that adequate drug and alcohol treatment programs be available for pregnant teenagers who are substance abusers.

2) **Sexual Harassment** – Sexual harassment occurs when a student, teacher or other school employee is subjected to any unwelcome behavior that is sexual in nature. Schools should educate administrators, teachers, and students about sexual harassment and create and publicize policies and procedures for reporting and responding to complaints. These policies and procedures should include establishment of and training for a committee or specified personnel charged with developing and enforcing guidelines related to sexual harassment. Policies on sexual harassment should protect the rights of all parties involved. Establishing procedures for addressing sexual harassment complaints sets up an appropriate climate for discouraging harassment.

3) **Sexual Assault** – Girls are particularly likely to be the victims of sexual violence in the schools. Assertiveness training and self-defense classes can give female students skills that will enable them to protect themselves from assault. If a student is raped or molested, a wide range of support services should be available through school-based or school-linked clinics. Those services might include support groups, counseling programs, and referrals to resources in the community.

CONCLUSION

As strategies for achieving the education goals are developed, concerns about equity for all individuals – very much including girls and women, members of racial and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities – must receive careful and thoughtful consideration. NCWGE hopes that *Education For All: Women And Girls Speak Out On The National Education Goals* will facilitate the process. The Coalition, and our constituent organizations, stand ready to provide further assistance to this critically important effort.

NCWGE ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSING EDUCATION FOR ALL: WOMEN AND GIRLS SPEAK OUT ON THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

American Association of School Administrators, Office of Minority Affairs

American Association of University Professors

American Association of University Women

American Civil Liberties Union

American Educational Research Association

American Home Economics Association

Association for Women in Science

Center for Women Policy Studies

Displaced Homemakers Network

The Equality Center

Federation of Organizations for Professional Women

Girls Incorporated (formerly Girls Clubs of America)

National Association for Girls and Women in Sports

National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors

National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest)

National Coalition for Sex Equity in Education

National Commission on Working Women of Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc.

National Education Association

National Organization for Women

National Women's Law Center

National Women's Political Caucus

Office of Women in Higher Education, American Council on Education

Organization of Pan Asian American Women

Project on the Education and Status of Women, Association of American Colleges

Project on Equal Education Rights of the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund

Southern Coalition for Educational Equity

United States Student Association

Women's Legal Defense Fund

Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc.

NATIONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATION ADOPTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION, February 25, 1990

Readiness

Goal 1: By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

Objectives:

- All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.
- Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need.
- Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.

School Completion

Goal 2: By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Objectives:

- The nation must dramatically reduce its dropout rate and 75 percent of those students who do drop out will successfully complete a high school degree or its equivalent.
- The gap in high school graduation rates between American students from minority backgrounds and their non-minority counterparts will be eliminated

Student Achievement and Citizenship

Goal 3: By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including english, mathematics, science, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Objectives:

- The academic performance of elementary and secondary students will increase significantly in every quartile, and the distribution of minority students in each level will more closely reflect the student population as a whole.
- The percentage of students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and write and communicate effectively will increase substantially.
- All students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility.
- The percentage of students who are competent in more than one language will substantially increase.
- All students will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this nation and about the world community.

Mathematics and Science

Goal 4: By the year 2000, U. S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

Objectives:

- Math and science education will be strengthened throughout the system, especially in the early grades.
- The number of teachers with a substantive background in mathematics and science will increase by 50 percent.
- The number of U.S. undergraduates and graduate students, especially women and minorities, who complete degrees in mathematics, science, and engineering will increase significantly.

Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Goal 5: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Objectives:

- Every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work.
- All workers will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills, from basic to highly technical, needed to adapt to emerging new technologies, work methods, and markets through public and private educational, vocational, technical, workplace, or other program.

- The number of quality programs, including those at libraries, that are designed to serve more effectively the needs of the growing number of part-time and mid-career students will increase substantially.
- The proportion of those qualified students, especially minorities, who enter college; who complete at least two years; and who complete their degree programs will increase substantially.
- The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially.

Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools

Goal 6: By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Objectives:

- Every school will implement a firm and fair policy on use, possession, and distribution of drugs and alcohol.
- Parents, businesses, and community organizations will work together to ensure that schools are a safe haven for all children.
- Every school district will develop a comprehensive K-12 drug and alcohol prevention education program. Drug and alcohol curriculum should be taught as an integral part of health education. In addition, community-based teams should be organized to provide students and teachers with needed support.